UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
55th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 6 December 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 55th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/49/SR.55
21 December 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

94-82659 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10. 25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/49/38 (Supplement No. 38), A/49/176, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/217-E/1994/103, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/308, 314 and Corr.1, 327 and Corr.1, 349 and 354, A/49/365-E/1994/119, A/49/378, 381, 462 and Corr.1, 506, 532, and 587 and Corr.1; A/C.3/49/13 and 26)

1. Ms. BAIARDI QUESNEL (Paraguay) said that the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (A/49/378) recognized that the world economy had changed and that, in certain measure, it was women who had made many of the positive changes possible. Development and economic growth were closely linked to the advancement of women. Nevertheless, there was great inequality between men and women in decision-making and access to credit. Providing women with greater access to credit could be a way of combating poverty.

2. Education was essential for ensuring equality between men and women because it increased women's ability to voice their demands, meet their own needs, exercise their rights and participate in political life and civil society. Educated mothers passed on education and its benefits to future generations.

3. Violence against women, which was a serious violation of human rights, was a sad reality throughout the world. Domestic violence had both physical and psychological consequences for women and their children and had led to an increasing number of fatalities. The rape and harassment to which women and girls had been subjected in recent armed conflicts was equally reprehensible.

4. The Fourth World Conference on Women would provide an opportunity to promote the advancement of women through its Platform for Action. Since women's advancement benefited society as a whole, the international community must be committed to ensuring dignity and equity for women. Paraguay provided a good example of what women had done to assist their country during very difficult times. In recent years, undeniable progress had been made in the de jure advancement of women. The time had come to ensure de facto equality in the political, social and economic fields.

5. Mrs. ABDELGALIL (Sudan) said that valuable efforts were being made at the international level to promote the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Sudan was making similar efforts at the national level.

6. Since education was an essential foundation for the advancement of women, organizations of the United Nations system should give priority to the elimination of illiteracy among women and to ensuring equal access for women to education and training at all levels. Her Government had extended the duration of basic education from six years to eight years.

7. A delegation of Sudanese women had participated in the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women, held at Dakar in November 1994 as part of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Sudan had submitted

its national report to the secretariat of the World Conference earlier in the year. The World Conference must accord special importance to policy problems and to options for strengthening the role of women in development in the least developed countries.

8. Sudanese women were seeking to improve their status through the joint efforts of the Government and the women leaders of the Sudanese Women's Union. The Union sought to promote the advancement of women in all social and cultural fields by encouraging rational consumption and providing training in family nutrition, domestic industries and handicrafts. It supplied women with agricultural inputs, enabled them to own land and gave them access to credit and grants. It organized agricultural extension programmes for women, encouraged them to participate in agricultural associations and cooperatives and gave them the opportunity to occupy high-level positions in institutions closely linked with women's issues. It also represented women at meetings and in delegations in order to communicate the experience of Sudanese women and learn from the experience of women in other countries.

9. Since 1965, women in the Sudan had had the right to vote and to stand for election, and they had rights of inheritance and ownership. Paid maternity leave was granted a period of eight weeks, and leave without pay to care for a child could be obtained for a period of two years. Women had been granted all political and social rights, received equal pay for equal work and had access to all spheres of employment with the same rights and duties as men. There were 26 women in the transitional National Assembly, women occupied senior leadership positions in the provinces, and there were a number of women ministers of State.

10. Mr. BAIRAGI (Nepal) observed that in some countries and societies, women had made advances in economic decision-making through their participation in small and medium-sized enterprises. Generally speaking, however, the precarious situation of women could be improved only by enabling them to participate fully in the decision-making process in international economic negotiations and in national politics. Gender equality should be promoted universally to bring about positive changes in society as a whole, while women leaders should advance their own cause and play a decisive role in formulating and implementing programmes for the advancement of women.

11. The United Nations had been playing an instrumental role in enhancing the status of women. Although some progress had been made, lack of commitment meant that much remained to be done to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. His delegation welcomed the recent positive developments in the field of women's human rights. It supported the merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM and urged that the resulting savings be used for the education and training of women. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Nepal believed that the international community should provide proper support to women victims of violence, especially women in armed conflicts, refugee women and women displaced as a result of war or internal political strife.

12. Recent world conferences had emphasized the importance of women's empowerment and their increased participation in all spheres of life. He hoped that the Fourth World Conference on Women would identify specific areas for enhancing the status of women and give special attention to the problems of rural women in the least developed countries. The international community, Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should step up their concerted efforts to implement the recommendations and programmes of action of the various conferences. Genuine political commitment and additional resources were required to achieve the objectives that have been identified and national Governments could play a catalytic role in that regard.

13. Mr. AL-DOURI (Iraq) regretted that the overall efforts of the United Nations system and national Governments to improve the situation of women had encountered serious obstacles. The obstacles at the international level was the unequal economic and political relations prevailing among States. In the developing countries, unequal trade relations and debt also had a direct impact on social development, without which the situation of women would never improve. At the national level, the obstacle was the considerable emphasis placed on women's equality with men, at the expense of efforts to combat underdevelopment, poverty and ignorance. Moreover, the political will to overcome such obstacles to the advancement of women was lacking.

14. Having long recognized that the advancement of women was crucial to a flourishing society, Iraq had acceded to the international instruments on women and had done its utmost, in the framework of its development plans, to improve the services available to women in the social, economic, educational, health and cultural fields. Between 1987 and 1990, positive results had been achieved, including an increase in the number of women civil servants and female students in secondary and higher education, as well as the introduction of compulsory schooling for girls. The legislation enacted to guarantee the rights of women balanced traditional Arab values and the principles of Islamic law with a positive view of the economic, social and political role of women in modern society. Women accordingly enjoyed their legitimate rights and played an effective role in social and economic development, particularly in the agricultural, commercial, industrial, administrative and service sectors.

15. Such factors, however, could not be viewed in isolation from the country's current circumstances, which were having an adverse effect on the role of women. In that connection, the economic embargo imposed on the country for over four years had inflicted severe damage on women, whose physical and mental health had been seriously affected by the lack of food, medicine and other essential needs. Not only were women experiencing more gynaecological problems, but there had also been a sharp rise in the number of women suffering from psychological problems brought on by deprivation and constant worry over their families. With a view to freeing Iraqi women from such gloom and oppression, he hoped that calls would be made to lift the embargo against Iraq, which had fulfilled all of its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

16. Iraq attached particular importance to the Fourth World Conference on Women; it had participated effectively in the regional and international

preparatory meetings and was making its own preparations at the national level. He was sure that the Conference would be a significant turning-point for the advancement of women and their rights.

17. Mrs. SANDRU (Romania) said that her Government viewed women's human rights as an integral part of universal human rights. Romania's economic reform had had unexpected social implications for all citizens, particularly women, in terms of a decline in living standards and increased unemployment. Social protection had therefore become a basic element of the Government's reform programme.

18. While women had equal access to education and health care in Romania, there was still room to improve their participation in decision-making. Romanian governmental and non-governmental organizations attached special importance to providing women with appropriate employment, ensuring gender equality, pursuing an active social policy, particularly for vulnerable categories of women, promoting women to senior management and decision-making positions, and assisting the women's movement.

19. Her delegation fully supported efforts to strengthen the activities of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in view of its growing workload. The adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the decision by the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special rapporteur on violence against women were major landmarks in the protection of women's human rights that sent a clear message that gender-based violence would not be tolerated.

20. The process of revitalizing and restructuring the United Nations could provide a window of opportunity for improving and coordinating the activities of the Organization's human rights bodies and further strengthening its capacity to work for the advancement of women.

21. Despite the progress made thus far, much remained to be done to achieve the objectives laid down in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Fourth World Conference on Women would therefore be of major significance for the advancement of women world wide. Her delegation noted with satisfaction the considerable amount of preparatory work done by the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations, and agreed that the initial draft of the Platform for Action should be further developed by taking into account the discussions of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Platform for Action should also reflect the main recommendations of the various regional preparatory meetings as well as the national reports, so as to produce a coherent final document with clear, action-oriented targets.

22. Romania was aware of the need for a grass-roots approach to women's issues and believed that the objectives of the Platform for Action would be achieved only through the joint efforts of international, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individual persons. Her Government therefore supported the idea of setting up an NGO centre for countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe. Lastly, she hoped that the Beijing

Conference would increase sensitivity to the need for gender equality and promote a true culture of non-discrimination.

23. Mrs. GISSEROT (France) said that her delegation supported the statement on agenda item 97 made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union, particularly with regard to the importance of the platform adopted at the Vienna regional preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women. France supported the work of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and stressed the importance of its consideration of the reports of States parties to the Convention, particularly for evaluating their implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. France wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution to be submitted by Norway on improving the functioning of CEDAW.

24. Her country also supported the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), particularly its research into practical ways of promoting the advancement of women in developing countries. It urged INSTRAW to expand its activities for French-speaking countries. Her delegation highly appreciated the sound management practised by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and its work in implementing specific projects. It was particularly gratifying to note the Fund's efforts in preparation for the world conferences on population, social development and women, which demonstrated the continuity of its action and its capacity for innovation.

25. France had recently hosted a high-level conference on combating the AIDS epidemic. Because of the epidemic's social dimensions, women's needs must be given due priority in that regard. Lack of access to information, health care and social welfare systems could be a major determining factor in the spread of the disease. Inequality between men and women prevented women from demanding the right to protect themselves and also forced them into isolation. Combating AIDS was a challenge for women, particularly young women and mothers. In its final declaration, the Paris conference had stressed the need to enhance the status, education and living conditions of women. The Third Committee should not forget women when it considered health issues in general and AIDS in particular, and should not forget AIDS when it dealt with the situation of women.

26. With regard to respect for the rights of women as human rights, it was important for women to support democracy and equality in order to ensure their effective participation at all levels of political, economic and social decision-making. It was essential that United Nations human rights bodies should periodically consider violations of the rights of women, and the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women should step up their cooperation and coordination in that area. Much remained to be done to strengthen the recognition, promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of women as an integral part of universal human rights. France attached particular importance to protecting women against all forms of violence within the family and in society, especially vulnerable women such as migrant workers, refugees and women in armed conflicts.

27. Her country's conception of a more positive and dynamic role for women was based on the idea of an equal partnership between women and men, which was also the ultimate objective of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Her delegation therefore supported the adoption of ambitious targets for the representation of women in the United Nations Secretariat and urged Member States to put forward women candidates for senior posts.

28. France commended the high quality of the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, which raised real issues, particularly with regard to the role of the public sector, employers and the labour force, the limits of the informal sector, the importance of active policies with regard to the labour market, and the specific difficulties of countries in transition, and put forward interesting ideas on specific ways to encourage women's effective participation in development, in particular, through an integrated approach to employment.

29. Her country had participated in four of the regional preparatory meetings for the Beijing Conference and had been encouraged by the general desire to find a language of consensus that would allow real progress. Those meetings had also highlighted the very great involvement of non-governmental organizations.

30. Preparations for the World Conference were a priority for her Government, which had ensured that, in her role as coordinator, she had the active support of a national preparatory committee made up of representatives from a cross-section of society. Preparatory activities included the updating of surveys and reports on the status of women in France and the mobilization of public awareness and support. Four topics had been studied: women and public life, women and economic life, women and social cohesion, and violence against women. In view of the importance of non-governmental organizations, a comprehensive national survey had been conducted among women's associations, and the four non-governmental organizations represented on the national committee would be included in France's delegation to the Conference. A survey had also been conducted among young adults to ascertain their views on the role and place of women in France.

31. Her country's national report described a situation common to most European countries, in which positive elements were counterbalanced by weaknesses such as women's low level of participation in decision-making and greater vulnerability to unemployment and poverty. The report also looked at ways of reconciling women's professional and family responsibilities, with a view to improving the balance between men's and women's roles.

32. Her country would continue to mobilize public opinion in preparation for the Conference. Much remained to be done to improve the status of women, including integrating women's issues into general policy. To fulfil the legitimate aspirations of so many women, it was necessary to do the impossible.

33. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women almost a decade previously, the international political climate had become more favourable for

promoting peace and, therefore, economic and social development and the advancement of women. The Fourth World Conference on Women would give the international community an opportunity to renew its commitment to the Forward-looking Strategies and to focus more specifically on gender issues. His country had participated actively in the preparatory process and would do so at the final preparatory meeting in January 1995 and at the Conference itself.

34. In 1989, his Government had established a permanent national commission on women's affairs whose purpose was to improve the status of women, encourage gender awareness and analysis and promote women's participation at all levels. His Government's actions to promote the advancement of women were guided by the objectives of the World Conference: equality, development and peace.

35. His Government was working to promote equality between the sexes through education, health and legislation. It had reduced the illiteracy rate among women to a satisfactory level. It was working to make women more aware of their legal rights and limitations and had actively encouraged their participation in the revision of laws on discrimination against women. It was attempting to ensure gender equality within the family by encouraging men to share in housework and child-rearing. Great strides had been made in improving women's health by increasing their access to health services, safe water and sanitation.

36. However, in the area of political participation and decision-making, despite a number of legislative measures and policies, inequality between women and men remained marked, largely for socio-cultural reasons. His Government was determined to eliminate the disparity between de jure and de facto equality in that area.

37. With respect to development, his country had recently experienced rapid, sustained economic growth. Its export-oriented industrialization had been successful in part because of the many women who had entered the workforce. However, such women were often found in low-wage, unprotected occupations, and his Government was committed to correcting that situation.

38. His delegation approached violence against women in conjunction with the issue of peace. In situations of armed conflict, women and children were the most vulnerable groups. Violence against women and children was of particular concern to his country, and the Government had adopted multidisciplinary, interrelated measures to eradicate violence, including crime and the exploitation of women and children. It had recently approved two bills concerning the sale and trafficking of women and children and the prevention and control of prostitution, and it strongly supported the role of the mass media in portraying a positive image of women.

39. His Government thanked the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for their financial and technical assistance in the form of various women's development projects, particularly UNIFEM for its pilot project to provide venture capital to women for business development and to link women up with formal financial institutions.

40. At the regional level, his country and the five other countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had adopted a declaration on the advancement of women emphasizing cooperation in that field. In preparation for the Beijing Conference, Thailand had participated actively in the Asian-Pacific regional preparatory meeting at Jakarta. At the international level, since its accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985, it had revised many laws and regulations with a view to lifting all of its reservations to the Convention in the near future.

41. The advancement of women owed much to the work of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Organization was far from achieving its 1995 target for improving the status of women in its own Secretariat. Closing that gap would require a concerted effort on the part of the Secretary-General and the Member States. States must contribute by nominating qualified women for Secretariat posts, and effective mechanisms must be provided to monitor, appraise and follow up the new plan of action proposed by the Secretary-General.

42. Mrs. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) said that the Beijing Conference was of particular importance for her country because it was the first time that Liechtenstein would be participating in a world conference on women. Although it had not been represented at the Nairobi Conference, it looked to the Forward-looking Strategies as guidelines for the promotion of women's rights. Women in her country had obtained the right to vote and to be elected to public office in 1984. Ten years later, 8 per cent of its members of Parliament and 35 per cent of its diplomatic corps were women, not to mention the two women in its five-member Government. Positive measures to promote women within the civil service included the introduction of appropriate in-service training and linguistic guidelines and the creation of a working group to elaborate additional measures. The Constitution had been amended to stipulate equality between men and women, and family and marriage law now established equal rights and responsibilities for both spouses.

43. Her delegation believed that the United Nations should take the lead in integrating women into the decision-making process, which unfortunately it had not done. She therefore welcomed the new strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, described in the report of the Secretary-General on that subject (A/49/587).

44. Regarding the three core issues of the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women - education, development and peace - she said that growing awareness of women's contribution to development and prosperity was not always accompanied by practical steps to acknowledge that contribution. For example, women's work within the family was not recognized for the purposes of such basic provisions as social insurance.

45. Education was needed to promote awareness of women's rights among both men and women. Educational methods must be adapted to support, rather than undermine, girls' self-esteem and to encourage them to take part in decision-making and pursue studies leading to better paid occupations.

46. On the issue of development, her country was encouraged that the International Conference on Population and Development had adopted language acknowledging women's crucial role in population control, resource management and the pursuit of development goals. It was of the utmost importance that the World Summit for Social Development should consolidate that progress by adopting effective measures to alleviate poverty, unemployment and social marginalization, from which women were among the first to suffer.

47. Turning to the issue of peace, she noted that women suffered enormously in armed conflicts, often as refugees or internally displaced persons who were particularly exposed to acts of violence. Gender equity was an important factor for a society's stability and thus for peace. That in itself was a compelling reason to work for the elimination of female infanticide, forced prostitution and trafficking in girls and women. Violence against women was hindering the human development of women everywhere and affecting the well-being of children and families. It also presented a major obstacle to the achievement of sustainable development by limiting the economic and social role of women. Despite efforts to enforce women's rights in many areas, such violence was not decreasing. The United Nations had reacted to that situation through its Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and through the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the issue. However, it must not rest on its laurels, for much remained to be done.

48. Further action was needed to integrate the issue of equal status and human rights for women into the mainstream of United Nations activities, as recommended by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In that connection, her Government believed that the special relationship between UNIFEM and the United Nations conferences on women would contribute to building an innovative women's development agenda for the twenty-first century.

49. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that, despite the emphasis placed on achieving women's rights, millions of women worldwide continued to suffer from discrimination that impeded their full enjoyment of political, civil, social and economic rights. Strengthening the relationship between those rights and socio-economic development presented a significant challenge for the international community. His delegation hoped that the World Summit for Social Development would address women's problems and that its Programme of Action would consider ways of documenting the aforementioned relationship, so that the United Nations could achieve its objective of increasing women's participation, particularly within its own system. In that connection, he endorsed the conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/49/587).

50. The Fourth World Conference on Women would lay the foundations for international efforts aimed at achieving equality for women and strengthening their rights. The progress made since Nairobi should be fully reviewed, with a view to establishing priorities for future action and ensuring that the necessary attention was paid to such action.

51. Since the days of the Pharoahs, women had participated effectively alongside men in all sectors of Egyptian society, a principle which was enshrined in the Constitution. Under current legislation, women were guaranteed an active political role at both the national and the local level. They held senior political and diplomatic office, and were also prominent in trade union activity.

52. With regard to preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Platform for Action should be realistic in considering the specific problems of women, with a view to producing recommendations that were both practical and feasible. Emphasis should be placed on the deteriorating economic situation of women in Africa and its repercussions for women's health and education, as well as on poverty, ignorance and malnutrition, which were increasingly acute. In that connection, economic reform programmes, particularly in the developing countries, needed to include specific strategies for protecting women from the adverse effects of such reforms. It was vital to build on the conclusions and recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development concerning the participation and empowerment of women; education should promote awareness of issues related to the advancement of women and women's education should be improved to guarantee equality between the sexes. Lastly, the violation of women's rights during armed conflicts was a violation of their basic human rights and of the principles of international law. In that connection, the international community should firmly address the flagrant violations committed against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

53. He reiterated the importance of ensuring that the resources allocated to the Fourth World Conference on Women under the United Nations regular budget were commensurate with those allocated to other international conferences. It was also crucial to ensure the success of the Conference by providing sufficient resources to cover preparations by the Commission on the Status of Women, as well national and regional preparations. In conclusion, he praised the international community for devoting greater attention to women in the developing countries, with a view to enabling them to participate effectively in their countries' socio-economic development.

54. Mr. KA (Senegal) said that, despite the valiant efforts to eliminate the prejudices and practices which perpetuated women's marginalization, women still did not enjoy full rights. The world had changed profoundly in the past decade, but it was questionable whether women had actually benefited from the changes. The same obstacles to their emancipation and fulfilment existed, to a greater or lesser degree, in every country. Equality between men and women would remain illusory until countries succeeded in eliminating such barriers to women's advancement as poverty, absence of legal status, insufficient access to health care and education, and lack of participation in economic and political decision-making.

55. The situation was worse in the developing countries, where women had to struggle to survive in physically and economically hostile environments. In urban settings, women were subject to exclusion and other constraints. In rural areas, they faced extreme poverty, overwork and illiteracy. Their contribution

to development often went unacknowledged because of the difficulty of evaluating work in the informal sector.

56. The advancement of women had been a priority for Senegal since its independence. His Government had taken steps to respond to the legitimate aspirations of women, without whom no development policy could succeed. More than two decades previously, his country had adopted a family code under which women were granted a legal status which protected their rights and freedoms as individuals. The code, which balanced traditional values with the demands of membership in the international community, was regularly amended to reflect current developments relating to women's rights. His Government also promoted the advancement of women through its Ministry for Women, Children and the Family, which was responsible for implementing and monitoring Government policy in those areas. His country had instituted fiscal incentives and reduced red tape in order to promote and encourage women's associations in the production sector.

57. His delegation commended those States which had recently acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and urged those which had not yet done so to take that step. It noted with interest the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for improving the procedure for its consideration of reports by States parties.

58. His country attached particular importance to the Fourth World Conference on Women. It endorsed the analyses and recommendations contained in the platform for action adopted by the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women, held at Dakar in November 1994, and hoped that they would be duly taken into consideration at the World Conference.

59. He hoped that the Conference would give renewed impetus to efforts to enhance the status of women. The advancement of women depended on achieving certain specific goals: greater equality for women in the enjoyment of rights and the sharing of responsibilities; greater equality of opportunity; and women's full involvement in political decision-making and peace processes. All those attending the Conference had a duty to ensure that its recommendations and conclusions were translated into effective action, accompanied by the necessary institutional and financial arrangements.

60. Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Observer for Palestine) said that eliminating discrimination against women and achieving equality between men and women were essential to enabling women to participate effectively in the development of their society. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies had laid the foundations for promotion and protection of women's rights and had helped to identify the obstacles to progress in that direction. Reviewing and appraising women's progress since the adoption of the Strategies would open the way for identifying practical measures for adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had also emphasized that women's human rights should be an integral part of United Nations human rights activities.

61. The international community had been showing increasing concern for the advancement of women and the protection of their rights. Nevertheless, women in many countries still suffered the devastating effects of armed conflict, colonization, foreign domination and occupation, violence, displacement and poverty. Palestinian women continued to endure such suffering and were still being denied their fundamental rights. There was a clear link between national liberation from occupation and social progress, development and equality between men and women. The only way to improve the difficult conditions under which Palestinian women were living was thus to end the Israeli occupation, the main cause of such conditions, and to bring about self-determination and independence for the Palestinians. Only then could Palestinian women participate fully in the development of their society and the building of their nation.

62. Palestinian women, both inside and outside the occupied territory, were doing all they could to become part of the Palestinian National Authority, in order to participate effectively in its legislative and executive decision-making. Action in that connection included the drafting by Palestinian women's organizations of a common declaration of principles emphasizing the rights of women and their equality with men; the establishment of a women's caucus; the opening of technical and legal assistance centres for women; and the establishment of a committee of experts to integrate women's issues into the school curriculum.

63. Palestinian women had taken an active part in the Western Asia regional preparatory conference for the Fourth World Conference on Women, which had prepared a draft regional plan of action for the advancement of Arab women to the year 2005, based on country reports, national plans of action and international and regional resolutions.

64. Until Palestinian women achieved full equality, were integrated in development and were able to live in peace, freedom and democracy in the region, the international community had a duty to assist and protect them. Such assistance was all the more necessary at a time when real progress was possible. In that connection, she thanked all those who had shown consistent support for the Palestinian people.

AGENDA ITEM 100: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued) (A/C.3/49/L.30 and 33)

Draft resolution A/C.3/49/L.30

65. The CHAIRMAN, drawing attention to draft resolution A/C.3/49/L.30 entitled "Report of the Committee against Torture and status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment", said that the resolution had no financial implications for the programme budget. Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Chile, Guatemala, Hungary, Monaco, New Zealand, San Marino and the United States of America wished to be added to the list of sponsors.

66. Mr. AQUARONE (Netherlands) said that in the first line of paragraph 11, the words "and developing countries which so agree" should be added after "Invites donor countries". In the second line of paragraph 14, the words "States parties which" should be replaced by "States which are parties to the Convention and".

67. Draft resolution A/C.3/49/L.30, as amended, was adopted.

Draft resolution A/C.3/49/L.33

68. The CHAIRMAN, drawing the Committee's attention to draft resolution A/C.3/49/L.33 entitled "Human rights and extreme poverty", said that the draft had no financial implications for the programme budget. Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Gabon, Madagascar, Mongolia, Niger, South Africa and Zambia wished to become sponsors of the draft resolution.

69. Mr. BARRETO (Peru) said that Bangladesh, Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Honduras, Malaysia, Mali and Mauritius wished to be added to the list of sponsors.

70. Draft resolution A/C.3/49/L.33 was adopted.

71. Ms. MURUGESAN (India) said that her country had sponsored the draft resolution because of its commitment to the eradication of poverty in all its aspects and to the promotion of the right to development. It hoped that at the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, the international community would pledge to eradicate poverty and to provide the additional resources needed to achieve that goal.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.